

PASA to launch educational campaign promoting critical role of architectural profession

Paragon Architects South Africa (PASA), part of the Paragon Group of architecture and interior architecture companies, plans to launch an educational campaign with the aim of countering the lack of awareness about the architectural profession, the critical role it plays in the development of South Africa, and its potential to offer viable career paths, in rural areas.



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Thulani Sibande, director of PASA, highlights that the organisation has been awarded a level one broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) rating for 2018. The Paragon Group is currently heavily involved with the University of Johannesburg's (UJ's) Graduate School of Architecture (GSA). This is the youngest architecture department in South Africa, having grown from 76 students in 2016 to an anticipated 115 this year. Here the Paragon Group has visiting professorship status, with experienced staff members presenting guest lectures.

Focus on schools in rural areas

Sibande highlights that the next step of this programme is to focus on schools in rural areas. "We are looking to target learners from grade 10, as by grade 12 they should largely have made up their minds about their future career paths. We need to make learners not only aware of the importance of architecture in society, but how it is a perfect combination of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects."

In 2019, PASA aims to invite select groups of learners from various schools to a guided tour of the Paragon head office in Johannesburg, where they can experience first-hand how an architecture and interior architecture group functions on a daily basis.

"It is also important that learners become aware of major architectural trends such as the debate around building efficiencies, and the advent of building information modelling (BIM), and how this is revolutionising the design space," Sibande comments.